

I was appalled to receive the news today of Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to air a political smear piece. Consolidation of the broadcast industry is the dying gasp of a democratic society. Media giants are deathly afraid of opinion that might affect their audience, hence their ability to sell commercial time, and preconditioning of that audience to accept their blather seems to be a paramount preoccupation. This decision amounts to the rankest sort of propaganda, and should be unacceptable to the FCC and the FEC. In fact, they should be censured and their license revoked.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real

people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.